

SITUATION REPORT NO. 5
INCIDENT NO. 96-37
DATE: April 17, 1996 **TIME: 8:00 a.m.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58504

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring Flood. (Separate situation reports are being issued regarding Devils Lake, incident #96-01.)
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGE: Ice-encrusted rivers in northeast North Dakota continued to rise on April 16, 1996. As the water moves downstream, it encounters solid ice which causes serious ice jams, aggravating township and county roads, and rural and city dikes.

Officials in Grand Forks reported that the Red River rose to 41.7 feet, 13.7 feet above flood stage. The river is expected to crest at 44 to 44 ½ feet in the city by April 20 or April 21.

The largest rise in a 24-hour period occurred in Pembina when the Red River rose 3.9 feet to 34.4 feet. The river is anticipated to reach its crest of 51 to 52 feet late next week. Flood stage is 42 feet. The Red River remains covered with ice from Drayton north. Flooding problems in Pembina County also have been compounded by the Pembina River, which rose to 23.2 feet at Neche, 5.2 feet above flood stage. The river level may fluctuate 1-2 feet due to ice jams. The flood of record for Neche is 23.64 set in 1979. This is a first crest for Neche this spring. Additional flooding may occur after Canadian waters enter the system (probably sometime in May).

Rural dikes along the Pembina River, east of Neche, overflowed closing various township roads. Officials believe ice jams aggravated the flooding. The unincorporated city of Glasston, population 20, is still inundated with water. Early Wednesday morning, April 17, Hamilton, population 75, was inundated with overland flood waters. An attempt to sandbag the city was made but the water came too fast for the operation to be successful. The entire city is flooded.

Ice jams contributed to a rise in the Park River at Grafton, which reached 14.5 feet, 5.5 feet above flood stage.

Meanwhile, the Souris River, near Sherwood, fell below the 18-foot flood stage to 16.8 feet, but rose .6 foot near Foxholm to 12.3 feet, which is 2.3 feet over flood.

In Ransom County, a home was isolated from emergency services when a county bridge was closed. The bridge was damaged by a flooding Sheyenne River.

Foster County officials closed a road in Rolling Prairie Township after it was inundated by flood waters. Officials have initiated a pumping operation to relieve this situation.

In Wells County, a dike protecting ND Highway 200 failed, causing water to flow over the highway one-half mile east of Hurdsfield. ND Department of Transportation closed the highway on April 16. It has since been reopened. Wells County officials have closed 25 county and township roads.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: Volunteers continue to take an active role in floodlight efforts. Approximately 200 volunteers helped with sandbagging operations in Barnes County. Cavalier High School students assisted with sandbagging operations in Pembina County.

In Grand Forks, American Red Cross and Salvation Army are alternating days and sites for feeding volunteers and workers.

ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) has coordinated communications for volunteers walking the dikes along the Red River in Grand Forks. Dike patrol volunteers held an organizational meeting April 15, 1996, and began their efforts the next evening in staffing a 24 dike watch. Among the volunteers are military personnel stationed at the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

Wells County citizens responded to the ND Highway 200 dike failure east of Hurdsfield and attempted to plug the dike breach with hay bales.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Governor Schafer will tour flooded areas in northeastern North Dakota today. Cities include Grand Forks, Cavalier, Bathgate, Neche, Grafton and Oakwood.

County Commissions issuing disaster declarations on April 16, 1996, were Barnes and LaMoure. The Ransom County Commission issued an emergency declaration on April 15, 1996.

Officials in Grand Forks activated a Mobile Command Post as an alternate Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC in Grand Forks, staffed by county and city officials, is operating 24 hours a day.

Sandbag operations are in progress in Bathgate and other rural areas in Pembina County. Filled sandbags have been placed on a flatbed truck in Cavalier ready to be dispatched where needed.

Nelson County officials have barricaded approximately 25 roads because of flood waters.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers loaned one pump to Griggs and one pump to Foster counties for

their flood fighting efforts. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is supplementing sandbag resources in areas where supplies have been depleted.

In response to an unusually high snowmelt runoff in the James River Basin, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, will increase combined discharges from Pipestem and Jamestown Dams to 1,100 cfs on April 19, 1996.

The St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is continuing high releases out of Baldhill Dam in an attempt to control the levels on Lake Ashtabula, which is on the Sheyenne River North of Valley City.

Barnes County, Valley City and federal officials met on April 16, 1996, to discuss flooding problems along the Sheyenne River.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: All local requests for assistance have been met.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, continues to provide technical and equipment assistance to state and local officials.
9. OTHER INFORMATION:

Signed _____
Douglas C. Friez
State Director